

whole psalter could be preserved by refusal to meet this request. Everything should be done that will assist in perpetuating the use of the majestic and devotional psalms usually sung in the Church. If a considerable number of congregations should prefer selections of its psalms mostly loved and sung be placed with tunes for convenience in the first portion of the Hymnal part of the book of praise it would be most unwise to deny them. Something may be said on retaining the whole psalter as a legacy from the historic past of Presbyterianism. We ought to be willing to do what is reasonable to preserve the historic continuity of the Church. Even sentiment may be worthy of preservation if it has its roots in the life of the Church of earlier times. But there is another potent influence at work, "the world moves and we must move with it." The Presbyterian Church has found that out more than once. She has been compelled to break with the historic past in allowing the introduction of organs and in the use of hymns in divine service. How the question of the use of the whole psalter, or selections will end we of course do not know. But we should secure to congregations such reasonable liberty to use one or the other in the service of praise to Almighty God, and we earnestly hope the day will never come in the history of the Presbyterian Church that will see the psalms disused in public service.

## CHURCH PRAYER MEETING.

### A Profitable Service.

One of the prominent pastors in Chicago, whose prayer meeting is famous throughout the country, proposed the following topic for a recent Wednesday evening gathering: What sort of a midweek meeting do you get the most good out of? He urged his people to come prepared to say right out what might be in their hearts. Perhaps five hundred persons were present. After parts of two or three stirring hymns had been sung, led by the pastor, the whole congregation united in repeating the Lord's Prayer. Following another hymn came the reading, responsively, of the evening's lesson from the Scriptures. Then the pastor stated again the subject of the meeting, told why it had been selected—in order that he might know what meetings are the best for the average Christian—then named some of the subjects which, during his pastorate, had been considered: a series of meetings on explanation of the Apostles' Creed, four meetings on the four P's, the prayers, promises, precepts, prohibitions, of the Bible, meetings at which some special topic introduced by a special text of Scripture had been discussed, meetings in answer to the questions, What do the Scriptures say about regeneration, repentance, faith, sanctification? etc., meetings in which the clauses of the Lord's Prayer had been explained, the object always having been to introduce as much variety as possible and to have no two meetings exactly alike.

Some meetings, therefore, had been almost wholly devoted to prayer, others to conference, in others the pastor had taken up nearly all the time, in still others he had said almost nothing. Following this statement came singing, then the brethren began to speak. One said those meetings were best for him in which he got the most instruction. He could carry away most from these meetings. Another said he came to these meetings weary and wanted rest. He thought those meetings were best in which a Scripture subject was discussed and some special Christian experience was brought out. Another said all were good. He could hardly say which were best. He would not like to miss any of them. Another, a prominent business man, said that he had long ago made up his mind that if any meeting during the week must be missed it would be one on Sunday, rather than the prayer meeting, that to him was the greatest source of Christian strength. Another found himself run down by Wednesday, needing refreshment, an impulse, a push to take him along to Sunday, so he always came to the Wednesday evening meeting, and

found what he was seeking. Another got most out of the singing, which in these meetings is lively, frequent and well sustained. A last speaker thought the good he received depended most on the spiritual condition in which he came to the meeting.

After these and similar statements had been made with great promptness, with apt remarks, explanatory and supplemental, thrown in by the pastor, who stood while the brethren were speaking, several prayers were offered, then the meeting was brought to a close by warm and glowing words by the pastor, who announced that the next meeting would be a sort of memorial meeting for several excellent women who had recently been removed from the church by death, and then they would have a push meeting in accordance with the suggestion made in one of the testimonies which had been given.

From first to last there was not a moment without interest. Everybody was on the alert to hear every word. Prayers were tender, brief, earnest. The hymns were chosen with rare felicity. The atmosphere was a spiritual one. In going away from the church one could not help saying, "A church which has a prayer meeting like this cannot fail to be a power." Yet such a meeting can only be maintained as a result of constant thought and preparation on the part of the pastor and his leading people.

To have such a meeting is worth all it costs. Indeed a church without a midweek meeting in which Christians are refreshed and spiritually invigorated is no church at all. In another church, large and strong, foremost in every good work, the prayer meetings are places for the discussion of matters which concern not only the welfare of the church but the public welfare. Here such topics as, What do parents owe those who teach their children in the Sunday School? What impression has the World's Fair made upon you, and thoughts suggested by the Sunday's sermons are considered, and always with interest and profit. The chief purpose in reporting those meetings has been to call attention to the paramount importance of the midweek meeting. As one pastor says, put the prayer meeting first in your thought, the Sunday night service second and last of all the service on Sunday morning, then the church will take care of itself. His church does, and without any need of resorting to strange and startling topics for treatment or announcing any new departures in theology or proposing to shorten his discourse to fifteen minutes.

Any church whose membership cares more for the gospel than for crowds, for truth than sensation, for character than emotion, will find in the long run that this plan of sticking to the gospel will bring more people into the church, and make them worth more when they have entered it, than any other which the ingenuity of man may invent.

### FOUR PREPARATORY STEPS.

Ponder the lesson for the meeting, so as to draw out a personal application.

Read thoroughly here and there to secure some striking incident to relate, or a verse to repeat.

Actively seek to bring others to "our meeting."

Yield yourself to the directing and purifying work of the Holy Spirit.

### THEN AT THE MEETING.

Be promptly and happily on hand.

Yearn to be a blessing to others, not simply to get some good yourself.

Participate as early as possible, always hopefully.

Use the front seats. There is a blessing in getting near to the speaker and the centre of the meeting.

Never speak at length; briefly is better.

Incline your soul to song, prayer and praise, so as to honour God and assist the leader.

Only let your heart be honest in all you say and do.

Notice the stranger, the new member, and those who feel less at home, by providing them with a seat, Bible and hymn-book in the meeting, and by introducing them after the meeting.—*Exchange*.